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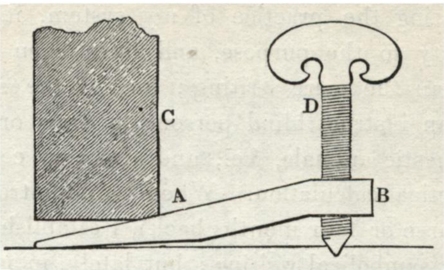
wedge inserted close under a door C; the end B is then raised by the screw D, which will press the door forcibly upwards against its frame on its hinges, and the screw-point will enter the floor enough to prevent its being slidden back. Thus fastened, all pressure from without to open the door must fail, as it can only force the door farther up the already tightened inclined plane.



No. X.

INSTRUCTION OF THE BLIND.

The Thanks of the Society were voted to Mr. H. E. **BRIDGE**, *13 Upper George Street, Bryanston Square, for the following Communication on his System of Instructing the Blind.*

13 *Upper George Street, Bryanston Square,*
September 24, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE the honour of introducing to your notice a contrivance of mine which is calculated to be of essential benefit to society; it is a method of enabling the blind to correspond by handwriting with their friends, by means attainable at the cost of one shilling. I have found, during the practice of my system, its complete applicability to the purpose, and have even carried it further than the mere writing; for, by the same principle, I can instruct blind persons to draw ordinary objects, domestic animals, &c., and also very considerably in arithmetical calculation. When I first introduced the system (three or four months back), I established it as a method of symbolical writing; but lately, in my practice at the public institutions, and with my private pupils, I have been enabled to teach our plain Roman characters, which, at one time, I feared could never be done. I have enclosed also a specimen of my success in this particular. This alphabet is embossed by hand with a piece of pointed ivory by a blind boy, twelve years of age, blind from one and a-half years of age, with whom I shall be very happy to attend upon you at any time.

The previous establishment of other systems is not calculated to lessen the value of my plan, as the machinery attendant upon the carrying out of these plans is necessarily expensive, and does not, after all, offer the advantages secured by my system.

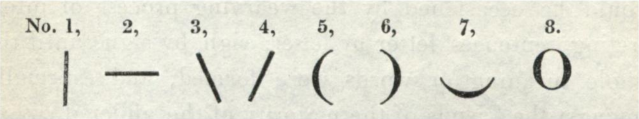
To facilitate the better appreciation of the improvements which my system of Tangible Writing for the use of the Blind, as at present practised, possesses over the one originally invented by me, perhaps it is right that I should briefly advert to the objections raised to that part of my plan which I have discarded.

The alterations are in the signs used and method of teaching. As my system originally appeared, the characters representing the twenty-six letters of the alphabet were entirely arbitrary, consequently rendering it imperative that a key, whereby to decipher them, should accompany the letter written to any individual unacquainted with their purport. Again, with characters foreign to the eye and understanding, much difficulty would be occasioned by the wearying process of interpreting sentences letter by letter, sign by sign, until the whole meaning or words were formed, and especially amongst the friends of the majority of the afflicted class; who, it is well known, are found in the lower ranks of society.

Finding that these things seemed to operate prejudicially to the advancement of my system, and foreseeing that the only method of remedy was in the adoption of the universally known Roman letter, I determined to adopt it accordingly.

I conceived (and am still of the same opinion), that it is impracticable to teach the blind the Roman alphabet with any precision, by simply guiding their hand for the formation of the same, till their memory retains their peculiar shapes, and practice enables them to exemplify them on paper to perfection; independently of the irksome labour attendant on such a system of tuition, irksome alike to teacher and pupil, and most unsatisfactory in its results. Much variety presents itself in the capacity of different blind persons; and while one would acquire the alphabet to some degree of fluency, many would abandon it as imperfect and unattainable, from, firstly, a deep-rooted prejudice which exists in a large majority of the blind, and also from an indolent disposition which developes itself as largely amongst this class, and which is to be found amongst thousands who possess acute intellectual perceptions, which the blind most certainly do.

To return, however, it subsequently occurred to me that the Roman characters are but a combination of the simplest and most natural of signs, viz. straight lines and curved; and these lines and curves in the following positions: —



and numbered in succession from 1 to 8. The pupil then has to commit the following to memory: —

No. 1 is a line going straight upwards.*
— 2 is a line going straight forwards.
— 3 is a line descending forwards.
— 4 is a line rising forwards.
— 5 is a curve, or half circle, points forward.
— 6 is a curve, or half circle, points backward.
— 7 is a curve, or half circle, points upward.
— 8 is a whole circle.

As soon then as the pupil can carefully repeat the above, he is called upon to give his idea of No. 1, or a line going straight upwards upon paper, which he can readily do; and after he can make (unerring) each of the above eight simple signs, and knows each by the figure-name given to it, he is allowed to proceed to the combination which is as follows: —

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* Fully satisfied that success entirely depended upon the proper impression of the shape of each letter on *the memory* of the blind individual, I felt it necessary to enable the blind *to describe in language* the shape of each individual letter.

It is here requisite to observe that the upper edge of the paper is signified upon the mention of the term "upwards;" the lower, or near edge, "downwards;" the edge to the right-hand, "forwards;" and that to the left-hand, "backwards," as originally; and the two latter "forwards and backwards," are reversed when reading the writing on the tangible side.

A is formed of three of the simple signs,viz. Nos. 4, 2, and 3; and he is taught their relative positions.
B is formed also of two of the simple signs, viz. Nos. 1 and two of No. 6, on the forward side of the No. 1, placed one immediately above the other, and joining each end of No. 1.
C consists of one simple sign, No. 5.
D consists of two simple signs, No. 1, and No. 6.
E of the two simple signs Nos. 1 and 2. Three strokes of No. 2 are required; and the pupil, as I have before observed, is made acquainted with their relative positions.
F of two simple signs as **E**, and but two of No. 2 are required.
G of two simple signs, Nos. 5 and 2.
H of two simple signs, Nos. 1 and 2. Two of No. 1 required.
I of one simple sign, No. 1.
K of three simple signs, Nos. 1, 4, and 3.
L of two simple signs, Nos. 1 and 2.
M of three simple signs, No. 1, and Nos. 3 and 4.
N of two simple signs, two of No. 1 and No. 3.
O of one simple sign, No. 8.
P of two simple signs, Nos. 1 and 6.
Q of two simple signs, Nos. 8 and 3.
R of three simple signs, Nos. 1, 6, and 3.
S of two simple signs, Nos. 5 and 6.
T of two simple signs, Nos. 1 and 2.
U of two simple signs, two of No. 1 and No. 7.
V of two simple signs, Nos. 3 and 4.
W of two simple signs, two of No. 3, and two of No. 4; or two letter **V**'s.
X of two simple signs, Nos. 3 and 4.
Y of three simple signs, Nos. 3, 4, and 1.
Z of two simple signs, two of No. 2 and No. 4.

The pupil is taught the relative positions of these signs, and can consequently acquire the alphabet with greater ease and precision.

These, then, are the characters I prefer teaching, and have adopted, from their universality. They are familiar to almost every individual; and we may hope the time is not far distant when the adverb may be omitted. But the plan of writing, or, I should say, the means of writing tangibly, by placing the poleographic, or ruled paper, over cotton velvet, and tracing the signs between the lines with an ivory pointer, will admit of the use of any character which the pupil may prefer learning.

Of the above characters, the tangibility is increased by the open and plain form of the letters; and they are also preferable, both from their extreme simplicity and popularity.

Respectfully soliciting the patronage which the approbation and encouragement of your Society must always secure.

I am, Gentlemen, &c. &c.

To the Committee of the
Society of Arts.

HENRY E. BRIDGE.

Mr. Bridge's communication was accompanied by specimens of words and sentences written by blind persons on paper ruled with embossed lines. The paper is placed on a piece of velvet, and the writer indents the letters with an ivory point between the ruled lines, so that they can be read by himself, or another blind person, by the sense of touch.